

ties will be undertaken in the following areas:—

- Condom Promotion
- Blood safety
- Control of sexually transmitted disease
- Information, education and communication
- Surveillance
- Case management
- Programme management

Criteria for Awarding Railway Contracts

* 194. SHRI RAM NIHOR RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have fixed new criteria for awarding railway contracts;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any quota has been fixed for SC/ST persons in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Reservation of a quota of contracts for any specific section of the society by the Government agencies is not in the best

public interest nor is it an accepted policy.

[Translation]

Import of Wheat

* 195. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA:
SHRI PROBIN DEKA:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to import wheat;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the countries from which wheat is proposed to be imported and the quantity and value thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to check its likely adverse effect on the domestic market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The Government have decided to import one million tonnes of wheat with a view to increase its availability and to contain market prices. No contracts for import have, however, been signed so far.

(d) Imports are not likely to affect the domestic market adversely.

[English]

Eco-Task Forces

* 196. SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the existing strength of the Eco-Task

(i) Abolition of price and distribution regulation on iron and steel with effect from 6.01.1992, while retaining partial distribution regulation in respect of some sensitive sectors.

(ii) The requirements of Defence, Railways, the Small Scale Industries Sector, exporters of Engineering goods and the North Eastern Region will continue to be met on priority as hitherto, at prices that may be announced by the producers from time to time. The Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel will oversee compliance of this arrangement.

(iii) The levies on account of the Steel Development Fund, Engineering Goods Export Assistance Fund and the JPC cess will continue to be realised by the JPC on the ex-works prices of the integrated steel plants (excluding IISCO).

(iv) The scheme of freight equalisation on Iron and steel has been abolished. The main producers, i.e. SAIL, VSP and TISCO will fix ex-stockyard prices of the basis of the actual freight or the freight elements as existed prior to deregulation under the Freight Equalisation Scheme (Rs. 956 per tonne on steel items and Rs. 645 per tonne on pig

iron, till these are revised), whichever is less.

(v) Import duties have been reduced from 35% to 10% on steel melting scrap, from 55% to 35% on pig iron, and from 65% to 45% on billets and HR coils, so as to facilitate imports to supplement domestic availability.

The main reasons for deregulation are as follows:

- to enhance the efficiency and international competitiveness in the steel sector;

- to provide requisite environment for the creation of new capacities in the private sector for meeting the increasing requirements of the future; and

- to enable the public sector steel plants to generate additional resources to fund their modernisation and expansion programmes.

(c) and (d). The main producers have not increased the prices, so far, on account of deregulation. There has been mixed trend in the open market prices after deregulation in different centres and for different categories of iron and steel, without any sharp fluctuations.

(e) To supplement domestic production through imports, import duties have been